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AUTHOR Lasley, Thomas J.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This study examines ways in which teachers who are more and less effective classroom managers prevent misbehavior and deal with misbehaviors they cannot prevent. Six middle-grade teachers in a suburban, midwestern school district were observed during spring, 1988. Information on misbehavior in teachers' rooms was coded according to four categories: activity type; form of misbehavior; teacher response to misbehavior; and student response to teacher's desists (a desist is defined as a specific teacher action directed at stopping a student misbehavior). Three classrooms were rated as effectively managed and three as ineffectively managed. Effective classroom managers were those who permitted the fewest misbehaviors and were most successful in stopping misbehavior once it occurred. Teachers who changed activitites in the class or varied the type of lesson from day to day were able to prevent more misbehavior than those who did not. The most effective desists used by teachers were nonverbal cues (low level desists) and rule reminders (high level desists). A general discussion of the classroom management research is presented, along with an examination of studies that deal with desist strategies of teachers. Implications for definition of a teacher's classroom management effectiveness are discussed. Thirty-nine references are cited, and the coding instrument is appended. (RH)

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ACTIVITIES AND DESISTS USED BY MORE AND LESS EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGERS

Thomas J. Lasley
Professor
and
Chair
University of Dayton

Janet O. Lasley
Graduate Student
University of Dayton

Susan Howard Ward
Graduate Student
University of Dayton

PS 019218

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Abstract

The authors examine how teachers who are more and less effective classroom managers prevent misbehavior through instructional variability and then deal with those misbehaviors that cannot be prevented. Six middle-grade teachers in a suburban, midwestern school district were observed during the spring of 1988. Information on the misbehaviors occurring in the teachers' rooms was coded according to four categories: activity type, form of misbehavior, teacher response to the misbehavior, and student response to a teacher's desist. The researchers' findings are considered in relation to other desist studies, and the implications for defining a teacher's classroom management effectiveness are discussed.

ACTIVITIES AND DESISTS USED BY MORE AND LESS EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGERS

Despite the best preventive measures, students will misbehave or otherwise be off task. Misbehavior is a part of classroom life because most students learn acceptable behavior by occasionally engaging in unacceptable behavior. As a result, teachers must possess a repertoire of techniques for dealing with misbehavior. This study examines how teachers who are more and less effective classroom managers attempt to prevent misbehavior from occurring and then deal with those misbehaviors that occur despite their best preventive efforts.

The authors begin by contextualizing their research effort in the broader classroom management literature. A general discussion of the classroom management research is presented along with a specific examination of studies that deal with desist strategies of teachers. This will be followed by a description of six teachers' classrooms, three of whom were classified by the researchers as effective and three as ineffective classroom managers. The reasons for the classifications are discussed and the implications for additional study are considered.

Research on Classroom Managers

Several excellent reviews of the classroom management research are available in the literature (e.g., Evertson,

1987, 1989; Doyle, 1985, 1986). Those reviews generally place an emphasis on the ecological aspects of classroom life and describe how important it is that teachers possess skill in preventing behavior problems.

Kounin's (1970) work represents some of the very first in depth and systematic study of classroom management phenomena. Kounin videotaped teachers as they engaged in the normal activities of classroom life. He found that a teacher's managerial effort in the classroom could produce a low rate of student deviance and, as a consequence, limit the number of desists used by teachers (a desist being a specific teacher action directed at stopping a student misbehavior). Kounin sought, in part, an answer to the question of what good managers do to increase task involvement and decrease student deviant behavior. He developed a variety of terms to describe selected management qualities of teachers: withitness, overlappingness, transition smoothness, and momentum. These terms subsequently have become the conceptual base for other researchers in discussing selected aspects of classroom management (Doyle, 1985; Evertson, 1987).

In 1974, Kounin and Gump also conducted research on the "signal systems" of lesson settings. This research focused on determining whether certain task-related behavior remained constant, independent of the differences of the teachers and children who participate in the lessons. They found that some classroom activities molded behavior and engendered

"smoothness" in lesson activities. In other words, there were certain types of student behavior expected within different types of lesson setting contexts regardless of the students who were present. This finding confirmed and extended Gump's (1969) earlier study results, which showed that student and teacher behavior varied with the type of classroom activity, an observation that also emerged in Bossert's (1978) work on task structures. Kounin and Gump (1974) concluded that it was the "continuity of signaling" that aided in the maintenance of student attention in the different lesson formats. If a signaling system were effective, then the smoothness and momentum of the lesson would be preserved. Lesson formats that included high numbers of appropriate signals flowed smoothly and at an adequate pace.

Numerous classroom management studies have been conducted since Kounin's initial research (1966, 1970). Researchers recently have sought to ascertain how effective managers at different grade levels establish their classroom management systems at the beginning of the year. Evertson and Anderson (1979) noted: "The first day . . . is the time when one 'pulls it together' or 'loses it,' when one is supposed to 'get off on the right foot' or have trouble the rest of the year" (p. 164). Findings from other researchers verify this conclusion and indicate that a various characteristics are exhibited by teachers (such as room arrangement, pre-planning of rules and procedures) that

correlate with their success and effectiveness as classroom managers at the beginning of the school year (Brophy, 1988; Evertson, 1989).

A well-managed classroom begins with the teachers' exhibiting careful planning of procedures and providing a clear conception of what constitutes appropriate student behavior (Sanford, Emmer, and Clements, 1980; Evertson and Anderson, 1979; Pittman, 1985). Research indicates that effective managers are adept at anticipating student needs and at organizing activities to respond to potential management problems. Effective managers know that good management does not end at the planning stage; they realize that for a system to be effective, rules must be taught and practiced (Evertson and Anderson, 1980; Evertson, 1989). Effective teachers carefully socialize and familiarize their students with classroom rules and procedures, though how they accomplish this may vary with the grade level (Evertson and Emmer, 1982). Hence, elementary teachers may place more emphasis on rule explication and secondary teachers may stress accountability systems (Brophy, 1988). Rule explanation processes and accountability procedures prevent a multitude of questions and misbehaviors because the students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them (Evertson and Anderson, 1979; Sanford, Emmer, and Clements, 1983). By anticipating and preventing student deviance, effective managers free themselves to more carefully monitor student engagement on academic tasks.

In contrast, less effective managers (those who do not have well-organized classrooms) find themselves busy trying to stop misbehaviors. They tend to be reactive rather than proactive. The less effective managers (LEMs) lose time that could be used for monitoring student behavior and performance on academic tasks; these teachers do not anticipate, plan for, or adequately train students in the routine procedures that are needed to function successfully in the classroom (see Sanford, Emmer, and Clements, 1980; Evertson, 1989).

Nonverbal behaviors of effective and ineffective classroom managers were studied by Brooks (1984). He found that the more effective managers provided clearer expectations regarding student behavior and classroom procedures. The use of effective nonverbal behaviors was found by Brooks to be critical to a teacher's management effectiveness. For example, a difference was found between the nonverbal behaviors that accompanied rule presentations of the MEMs and LEMs. The experienced and more effective managers used business-like nonverbal behaviors during the presentation of the classroom rules, such as establishing eye contact with the entire class and pausing after each rule to emphasize its importance. However, less effective managers employed nonverbal behaviors that were out of context with the verbal message, smiling throughout the entire presentation of the rules, establishing eye contact with selected members of the class instead of scanning to be sure the whole class understood the rules, and rarely pausing to

emphasize the presentation's seriousness. Although the verbal messages of more and less effective teachers were similar in content, the nonverbal behaviors selected by the most effective reinforced the verbal message whereas the nonverbal behaviors of the less effective did not.

Research on Desists

The studies discussed above deal most directly with the procedures and processes that teachers use in managing the class to prevent problems. What is far less prevalent during the past decade is applied science research that identifies specific techniques that effective teachers use to deal with misbehavior once it occurs. There is an abundance of theoretical literature on how to "deal with" misbehavior (see, for example, Glasser, 1969; Charles, 1989; Wolfgang and Glickman, 1986). Few classroom-based studies since Kounin's (1966, 1970), however, have been conducted to identify the differences between more and less effective classroom managers in dealing with behavior problems (see Good and Brophy, 1987). The desist research was very prominent in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since that time, though, many researchers have focused more on the interactive and ecological aspects of classroom management.

Kounin's research focused on how desist techniques relate to a "target" student's capacity to stop his or her off-task behavior. In an early study (Kounin, Friesen, and Norton, 1966), desists were rated with regard to clarity,

firmness, the manner in which a child was treated (positively or negatively), intensity, and specificity of focus. The teacher rankings on desist qualities did not correlate with students' subsequent rankings on deviancy or work involvement. Kounin concluded "that the manner of dealing with misbehavior as such is not a significant determinant of how well children behave in a classroom" (pp. 5-6). Much of Kounin's work focused on teachers working with primary level children (grades 1-4). Indeed, much of the early classroom management literature focused on the lower grade levels.

More recently, Pittman (1985) studied a successful first grade teacher's plan for controlling behavior in her classroom. The teacher was consistent in her response to misbehavior. Nonverbal cues, such as clearing her throat, a glaring look, a "go away" gesture, were utilized more than any other cues to control student behaviors. Nonverbal desists were used most often for misbehaviors that were not deemed serious by the teacher. Pittman found that the teacher consistently controlled the misbehaviors and she attributed effectiveness to a teacher's ability to utilize nonverbal desists.

Using research such as Kounin's, some authors (Wallen and Wallen, 1978) attempted to describe how the manner in which desists are used potentially influences their effectiveness. For example, Wallen and Wallen argued that desists have a two-dimensional quality--level of force (strength of desist message) and level of visibility (public-

private). Hence, a teacher who stands in front of the class and yells at a student to sit down engages in a high force-public desist. Low force desists consist of glances and a variety of nonverbal signals. High force desists consist of threats or consequences that are verbally and often publicly communicated. Private desists are communicated by the teacher without drawing attention to the misbehavior; public desists draw attention to the student's misbehavior and to the teacher's effort to stop it.

There are, quite obviously, other disciplinary strategies that focus on how teachers deal with misbehavior but they have usually been investigated in the context of "canned" programs (for example, Canter, 1976; Glasser, 1969). The canned programs presuppose that a teacher has learned a set of specific disciplining strategies and that he or she can employ those once misbehavior occurs. Such approaches are reported regularly in the literature and are part of the "hype" of professional programs or private commercial educational seminars. The literature on the efficacy of these programs is often political and vested. The researchers in this study chose, therefore, to examine teacher practices that were not situated in the context of a particular theoretical construct or program (e.g., assertive discipline), though, of course, every teacher implicitly adheres to some theoretical perspective by the very way in which he or she engages in classroom disciplinary practice (Lasley, 1989).

The Study

This investigation examines how desist strategies such as those described by Pittman (1985) and Wallen and Wallen (1978) are used by experienced teachers who have been identified by a school district as more and less effective managers and how those experienced teachers structure class actitivies to minimize the occurrence of misbehavior. In many respects the study represents a conceptual replication of Kounin's early studies, except the emphasis was on teacher behavior in intermediate classrooms (grades 5-8) and the researchers sought to determine if teachers identified by administrators as effective managers were indeed the most successful in dealing with and preventing misbehavior. Two research questions serve as the focus for the study:

1. Are there differences in the number and variety of activities that middle grade teachers use that might ultimately encourage or discourage misbehavior?

2. What response or desist techniques do effective and ineffective managers use to stop misbehavior?

A secondary issue investigated by the researchers was whether administrators are able to identify and successfully differentiate between effective and ineffective classroom managers.

Procedures

Six teachers were identified to participate in the study, three males and three females. The small size of the

sample is admittedly problematic. Still, the unique nature of the population (administrator-identified effective and ineffective managers) made it difficult to obtain a larger sample. All teachers taught at the sixth and eighth grade levels in a predominantly white, middle class suburban school district (fewer than five percent of the students in all classes were minority). There was an average of 14 years of teaching experience for the teachers involved. The school district administrators in this school system identified three of their strongest (most effective) and three of their weakest (least effective) classroom managers. Administrators were asked to use their own general definition of what constituted "strong" and "weak." The observers were unaware of the administrators' classifications until after completion of the data collection process. The data were intentionally collected in the last part of the academic year (1988). The researchers waited until late in the school year because it is during this time that the rule systems in classrooms begin to break down and misbehavior occurs with greater frequency.

The data collection instrument used in this study was developed from one originally published by Good and Brophy (1987) and conceptually similar to one used by Kounin, Friesen, and Norton (1966). The instrument (see Appendix A) was field-tested and revised, and observers were trained in its use. The observers practiced coding classroom sequences together prior to their collection of classroom data. Information on each misbehavior incident was recorded in four

categories: (1) activity type, (2) student misbehavior, (3) teacher response or nonresponse, and (4) student response to teacher desist. Each teacher was observed for a total of eight class periods (each class lasted approximately 40 minutes). The eight observations were split evenly between the two observers. The observations took place in three different morning class periods (first, second, and third) with a total of 44 actual observations occurring. Observers sat in the back of classes and coded each "behavioral incident" that they perceived as misbehavior.

Narrative records were developed after each class period giving a "critical incident" account of selected misbehavior episodes. Further, descriptions were written concerning the dynamics in which the critical incident occurred. Qualitative data from the critical incident narratives were used to contextualize the quantitative data.

The teachers were grouped (most effective managers and least effective managers) according to the frequency of misbehavior occurring during the observations and based on the teachers' success in stopping misbehavior. Chi-square (54.231, p=.001) showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups, with a total of 502 misbehavior episodes coded (288, LEM; 214, MEM). The effective managers, as defined by the researchers (not the administrators), were those who evidenced the fewest misbehaviors and were most successful in stopping misbehavior once it occurred. The "ineffectives" permitted the most

misbehaviors and were least effective at stopping misbehavior. Misbehavior was defined by the researchers as any overt off-task behavior that a student exhibited and that abrogated class rules (e.g., talking to a friend without teacher permission).

The instructional activities section of the observation instrument (category A in Appendix A) was used to construct a graph where incidence of misbehavior was compared to the type of activity evidenced when a particular misbehavior occurred. The researchers were concerned more with variety of instructional activities than with type or quality of the instruction. Other researchers have established that the type of activity is related to the amount of off-task behavior (Bossert, 1978).

Findings

The effective classroom managers were those teachers who permitted the fewest misbehaviors and who were most successful in stopping misbehavior once it occurred. A classroom management control label (LEM or MEM) for each teacher was established using as criteria for labeling (a) the frequency of misbehavior, (b) the percentage of stopped misbehavior, and (c) the number of disruptive misbehaviors. Smith, Jameson, and Daniels were labeled as LEMs (Less Effective Managers); Lord, Zandowski, and Bonner were the MEMs (More Effective Managers).

Figure 1 is a bar graph showing the total incidence

(and magnitude) of the misbehaviors for each teacher. Teachers are grouped according to their MEM or LEM label. Smith, Jameson, and Daniels (LEMs) have the highest incidence of misbehavior and evidenced the weakest ability to stop misbehavior (see Figure 2 - "misbehavior continues unchanged" and "misbehavior modified"). Stopped misbehaviors were determined by the number of "1" codes in column D of the observation instrument (see Appendix A). Bonner (an LEM) was able to stop misbehavior only 37% of the time; Zandowski (an MEM) stopped 69% of the misbehaviors in his classroom.

The greatest incidence of misbehaviors occurred in Ms. Smith's class. Students often modified their misbehavior once Ms. Smith used a desist. For example, during a math class (a recitation), students in Ms. Smith's class were allowed to walk around while the teacher talked, to sit on their desks or on the backs of chairs, to stand and look at the board, and to do work for other subjects IF they had completed their math assignment. This engendered a general sense of commotion, even though the students were not excessively loud.

The other criterion utilized in classifying the teachers was the number of stopped misbehaviors. Ms. Smith (stopped 41% of misbehaviors) was frequently not successful in completely stopping misbehavior; rather the students modified their behavior to another form of misbehavior. She reprimanded one girl eleven times in thirty minutes. Ms. Smith put checkmarks on the board as part of her discipline

Figure 1

Total Incidence and Magnitude of Misbehaviors From All Observations

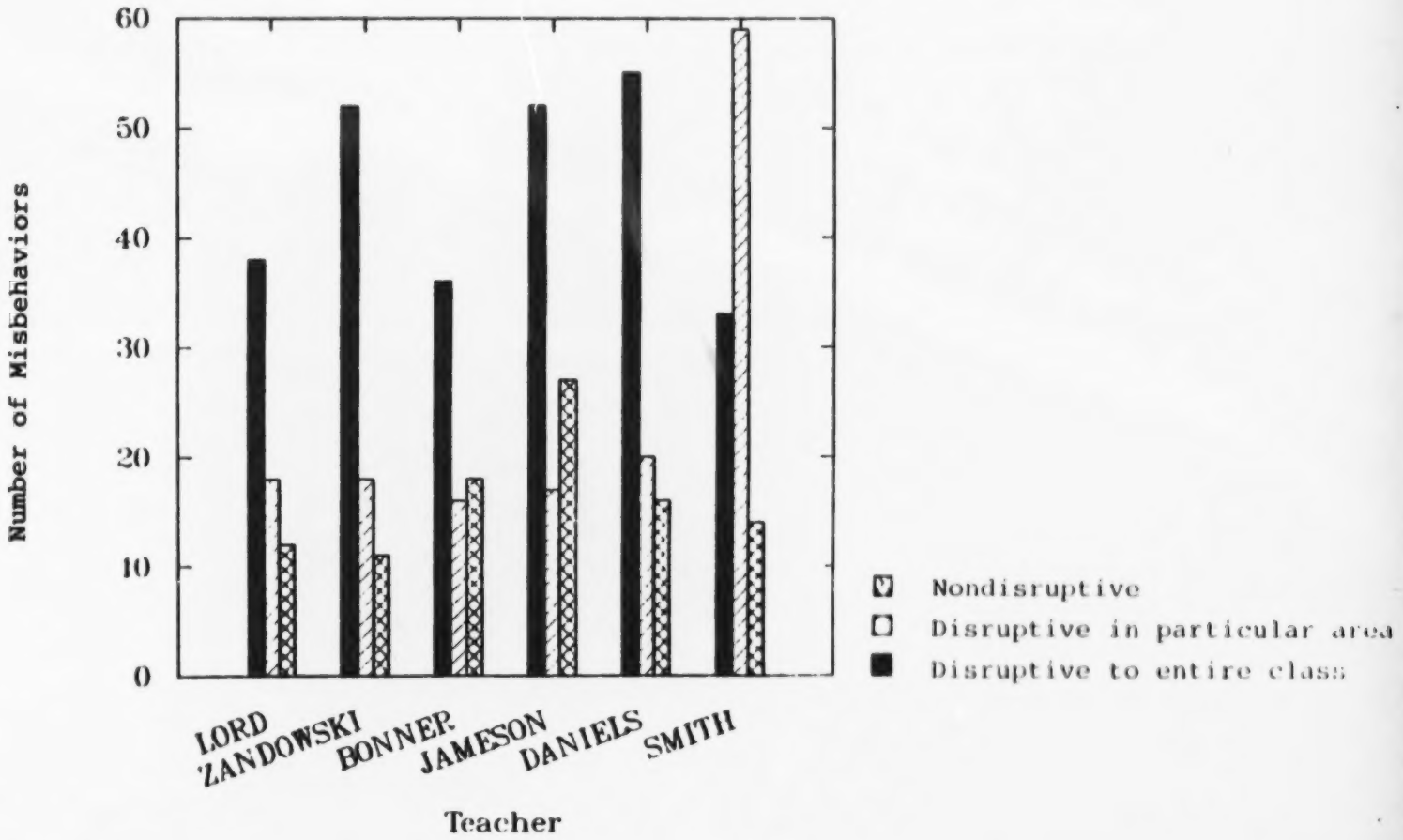
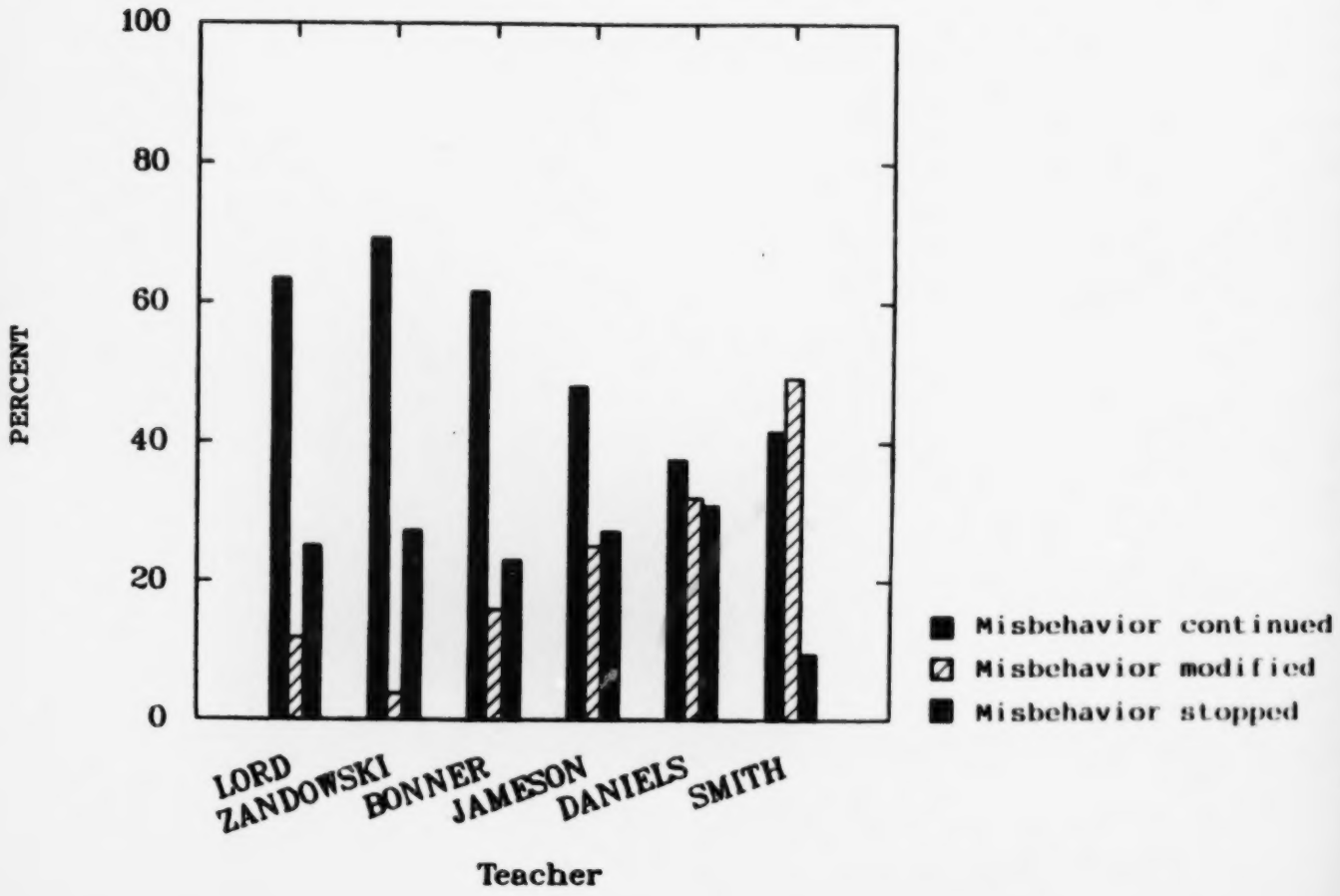


FIGURE 2

STUDENT RESPONSES TO TEACHER CORRECTION



plan, but several warnings were given before checkmarks were assigned.

Ms. Daniels, another LEM who stopped 37% of the misbehaviors, experienced problems because she permitted misbehaviors to escalate. Students in Ms. Daniels' class demonstrated, as the following critical incident indicates, a capacity to break rules without being punished.

> Students play cat and mouse with the teacher. They watch to see when the teacher is watching them or will move to their area of the room. When the teacher does come their way, they stop talking. As she walks to another area of the room, they start their conversation again but manage to keep their voices down low. When they are on the verge of getting too loud, they quiet down. (Observation, 5-11)

The behavior problems in Ms. Daniels' class represented sophisticated forms of brinkmanship (i.e., the students knew how to misbehave without being reprimanded). A low level of conversation existed in particular areas of the room and was initiated and perpetuated by one or two student instigators who the teacher never fully dealt with to discourage subsequent misbehavior.

Mr. Zandowski (an MEM) allowed much less off-task behavior to occur and did not waste time waiting for students to stop on their own when they did misbehave. One method Mr. Zandowski used to control student behavior and keep them on task was to call on all students, particularly nonvolunteers, during class lessons. Students never knew if they would be called on next during class. There was, however, a certain "let-down" once they were called on since Mr. Zandowski liked to call on each student at least once per class period. He

used a lot of student participation but he assumed control quickly if students were unable to function independently. The following episode is an example of that phenomenon.

> A student goes to the board to do a problem. Mr. Zandowski asks the class to help the student get started. Someone is called on and the student at the board responds by doing a problem. He then sits down and another student is called to the board. Mr. Z. keeps the students in their seats busy with questions while the person at the board works. He does not allow digressions. (Observation, 5/13)

The frequency of misbehavior and the success in stopping misbehavior were the criteria for initial categorization of instructors as LEMs or MEMs. After these groupings were established, researchers investigated two other factors (activities and desist strategies) that appeared related to the teachers' management success.

Activity Changes

Teachers who changed activities in the class period or varied the type of lesson from day to day were able to prevent more misbehavior. This reinforces, in part, the conceptual work of Doyle (1986) who describes how the context of class lessons influences the type of behavior manifested by the students. Figure 3 shows that the MEMs were able to limit misbehaviors regardless of the type of instructional activity. The LEMs, on the other hand, not only exhibited less instructional variability but were also less able to prevent misbehavior during certain types of activities and particularly during discussions and independent seatwork.

Teachers who had the most misbehaviors also used less

variety in their lesson formats (see Figure 4) so that students were expected to play the same role each day. The activities favored by these LEM teachers were the same ones rated by Kounin and Gump (1974) and Bossert (1978) as the least successful in keeping students on task: whole group and teacher-centered. The teacher (Mr. Zandowski) who used the greatest variety of teaching strategies consistently had the most highly involved class (high student engagement on-task). He continually communicated his expectations and would often assume control of the class when the students were not meeting his behavioral expectations.

Mr. Zandowski made use of many different teaching strategies. He gave quizzes, conducted recitations, and provided different forms of seatwork. The only activities that he carried on for the entire period were characterized by high student participation and high levels of teacher monitoring. Mr. Zandowski controlled the activity even when he temporarily gave "teacher" status to a student. He planned a variety of activities that maximized student participation but left him in control of the classroom.

In contrast, Ms. Daniels (LEM) relied heavily upon teacher-centered recitation. Some entire class periods were devoted to recitation. In fact, she used recitation 74% of the time she taught. The rest of the observed time was spent in transition and giving directions. The result was substantial student inattention and an escalation of student misbehavior as each class period progressed. Figure 4 shows

FIGURE 3

MISBEHAVIORS CATEGORIZED BY SITUATION TYPE

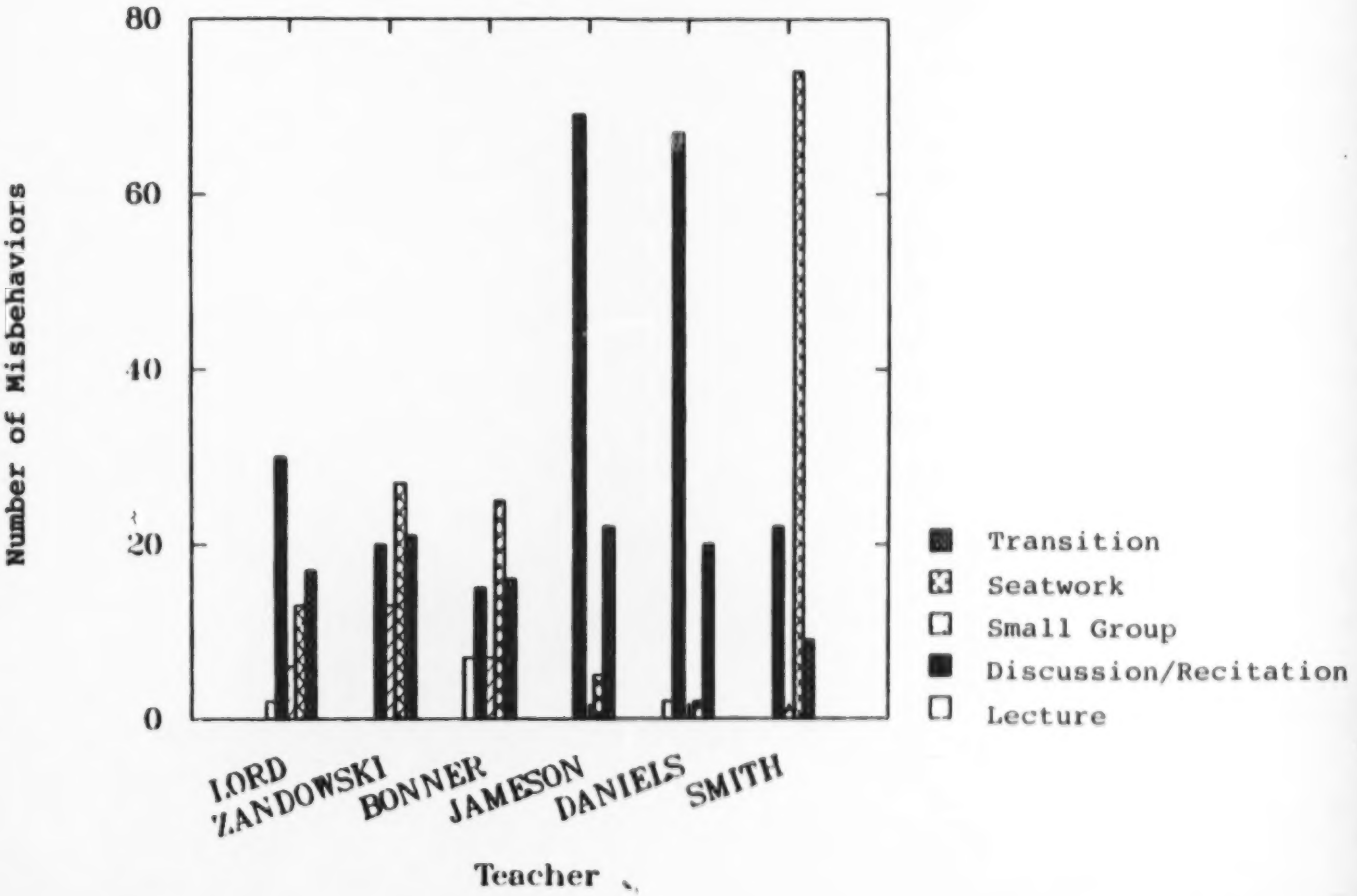
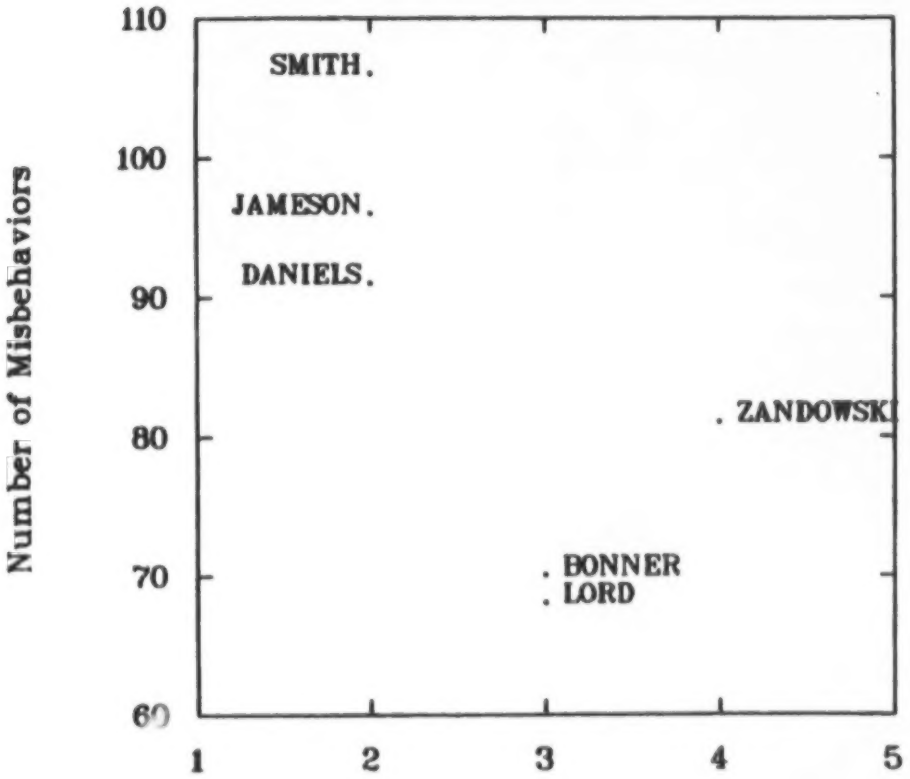


FIGURE 4

SCATTERGRAM COMPARING VARIETY OF
ACTIVITIES AND FREQUENCY OF MISBEHAVIORS



that the teachers with a "favorite" activity had the highest frequency of misbehavior.

Desist Strategies

The researchers classified the desists used by the teachers as either "high" level or "low" level. The levels are a variation on Wallen and Wallen's (1978) work, with a high level desist being one that disrupts class or draws attention to misbehavior and a low level desist being one that minimizes the extent to which a teacher publicly identifies a misbehaving student. High level desists enhance the degree to which a teacher's disciplining behavior may actually cause some students to go off-task (e.g., a teacher disrupts a class in the process of disciplining an off-task student). Category C (Appendix A) has the teacher responses arranged from low level desists (items 1-5) to high level desists (items 7-11). (Item 6--ignoring-- is considered neither high nor low and will be discussed separately. Items 12 through 14 could be high or low depending on the circumstances within which the desist is used.)

The MEMs tended to use fewer high level desists to handle misbehavior. Mr. Zandowski in 81 misbehavior incidents used only 5 high level responses. Mr. Lord in 68 misbehavior incidents used only 4 high level responses. Both MEM teachers were more inclined to use low level desists or to ignore the misbehavior altogether.

The teacher, Mr. Zandowski, with the most success in stopping misbehavior (stopped 69% of the misbehaviors that

occurred) walked around the classroom and looked at students' work frequently. He questioned students if they seemed to need help. Use of student names was one way that he made the students feel he always knew what was happening. He often "spotlighted" students not only as a desist strategy but as a method of drawing positive attention to those individuals who sought to create trouble.

> One student, Sam, keeps his hand up most of the time during recitation. Sam is often mildly sarcastic and critical. Mr. Zandowski does not usually call on volunteers. When he is finally called on, Sam makes a negative comment about Mr. Z's handwriting on the blackboard. He says he is not able to understand the question. Mr. Z. fixes the word on the board and seems mildly irritated. Later in the period when students are measuring themselves, each other, and the room, Mr. Z. uses Sam as a positive example of height and size. Sam is the tallest person in the room and possibly has the largest shoe size. (Observation, 5/3)

The MEMs relied heavily on the use of student names. Ms. Bonner and Mr. Zandowski used student names in two ways--to draw misbehaving students back on task and to maintain the attention of the students during the lesson. Mr. Zandowski, for example, called on students in rapid fashion to keep them focused on lesson content. When the MEMs used the students' names as part of the desist technique (e.g., "Mary, I need your attention"), the misbehavior was never continued by an off-task student (see Table 1).

The researchers originally thought that MEMs would use significally more low level desists than the LEMs. That is, they would be more inclined to discipline students without using a highly visible desist technique. In fact, there was

no apparent (or statistically significant) difference between the number of high and low level desists used by the various teachers. The LEMs did use more high level desists than did the MEMs, but this was attributable to the larger number of misbehaviors evidenced in their classrooms. The actual percentage of time that they used high level desists (40%) was about the same as that for MEMs (44%).

In fact, the most ineffective classroom manager (Ms. Smith) used the highest percentage of low level desists. Her problem was two-fold: the ineffectiveness of her desists (her students tended to modify rather than stop misbehavior) and the imprecision of her classroom rule system. She was unable to define for the students what constituted misbehavior and as a result her class always verged on being out of control. She had taught in excess of twenty years but still did not have clearly defined behavior parameters for the students.

The most effective desist techniques used by all teachers were nonverbal cues (low level desist) and use of rule reminder (high level). Table 1 shows the relative effectiveness of the various desists and the extent to which each was employed successfully by the LEMs and MEMs. For example, teachers who used rule reminders successfully stopped misbehavior 55% of the time (MEMs successfully used this desist 79% of the time; LEMs 53%). When nonverbal cues were used, misbehavior was stopped 79% of the time (MEMs stopped misbehavior 95% of the time; LEMs stopped it 50% of the time). To determine if one teacher's behavior may unduly

have influenced the results, the data were disaggregated. In general, all teachers exhibited all desist strategies presented in Table 1. The relative success of the teachers generally conforms to their LEM and MEM label. For example, for the rule reminder technique, the MEM teachers used the technique 17 times and were 79% successful in its use. Bonner (an MEM) used the technique five times and successfully stopped misbehavior four times; Lord used it eleven times and was successful nine times; Zandowski used it only three times and was twice successful. Jameson (an LEM), on the other hand, used the technique nine times and was successful four times; Smith used it five times and was twice successful; and Daniels used it three times and was successful twice.

Both LEMs and MEMs also used student names to stop misbehavior. (As indicated earlier, Mr. Zandowski was most successful in its use because he "dropped" names almost continually.) The teachers occasionally used student names as a name dropping technique (i.e., they utilized an off-task student's name during a lesson as a means of bringing the student back on task--see item 3 in column C of observation instrument) and more frequently, as a straightforward way of informing students to be on task (e.g., item 7, "Bob, I need your attention"). All teachers used the "name-related" techniques (items 3 and 7) a total of 36 times and successfully stopped misbehavior 69.4% of the time.

One of the least effective desist methods used by LEMs

and MEMs was to intentionally ignore misbehavior, effective 48% of the time. (Intentional ignoring occurred when an overt misbehavior was exhibited that the teacher observed but did not attempt to stop.) The LEMs used ignoring with much greater frequency and with much less success than the MEMs. They successfully used the technique 41% of the time, compared to a 55% success rate for MEMs. Researchers who have studied ignoring (see Evertson, Emmer, Clements, Sanford, Worsham, and Williams, 1981) have noted that it should be used only in specific circumstances (for example, when only one student is involved in misbehavior or when dealing with a misbehavior may disrupt an entire class). The LEMs in this study used ignoring almost indiscriminately. They appeared unaware of or unable to deal with the myriad misbehaviors that occurred in the classroom context.

TABLE 1

TYPE OF DESISTS USED BY LEMs AND MEMs
AND THEIR SUCCESS RATE

Desists	N**	Percent Successful	N-MEM	Percent Successful	N-LEM	Percent Successful
1	33	79	20	95	13	54
2	42	50	5	80	35	51
4	14	40	7	57	7	14
6	172	48	73	55	99	41
7	29	50	8	100	21	52
8	36	55	19	79	17	47

*DESIST CODES

1. Uses nonverbal cue, such as eye contact, hand gesture, touching.
2. Moves closer to misbehaving student.
4. Incorporates distracting behavior as part of lesson.
6. Ignores minor disruption (2 min.).
7. Calls offender's name and asks for attention.
8. Uses rule reminder.

**NOTE: Desists used fewer than 14 times are not included on the table.

The Problem of Defining Effectiveness

When the district was initially contacted, the school administrators were asked to identify their most and least effective classroom managers who were experienced teachers. Their names were given to the researchers but their "label" was not provided. The researchers did not know, therefore, which teachers were considered strong and which were weak managers prior to the observation period. After the study was completed the district informed the researchers of the labels and the reason for the label. The administrator-identified LEM teachers were described as somewhat disorganized and poorly planned. The MEM teachers, on the other hand, were described as positive and cooperative. Interestingly, the researchers' groupings of LEMs and MEMs (which were based on the number of misbehaviors and percentages of stopped misbehaviors) did not correspond to the district's teacher groupings of strong and weak. Because of the differences the researchers decided to interview all six teachers and to have them complete an attitude inventory. The three teachers labeled by the district as MEMs were indeed the most positive during the interviews. Two of these district-perceived "strong" teachers were, however, identified as LEMs by the researchers.

For example, one teacher, Ms. Daniels, who was labeled an LEM by the researchers but an MEM by the district was extremely positive about teaching in the interview. She said that it was important to be open with students and to enjoy

teaching. Regrettably, her rhetoric did not match her classroom behavior. She expressed the need to talk to students after class, yet the after-class interactions evidenced during the eight observational periods was in the form of subtle sarcastic remarks about students' hair and clothing. Ms. Daniels was also one of the least successful in stopping misbehavior (stopped 37% of misbehavior) once it occurred. Her rapport with students seemed to be based on their interest in the books discussed in class or their capacity to obtain good grades in her class. She ignored students or made sarcastic remarks when she was not pleased with their work. The only teacher to be labeled an MEM by both the district and the researchers was Mr. Zandowski. He believed that respect toward teachers, others, and self was the primary goal in teaching. He also viewed it as imperative to keep the students on task. He sent home positive comments to parents on a regular basis throughout the year. In an interview he stated: "They (students) have to realize that they have a chance" (Interview Zandowski, 6/16/88). The notes to parents were his way of showing students that he believed in their abilities, regardless of their current performance level.

The administrators appeared to rank teachers as strong or weak based more on the teachers' attitudes than on their actual performance. The researchers, on the other hand, labeled teachers on how they actually managed the classroom, not on how effectively they related interpersonally with other

adults in the school setting.

Limitations

Two significant limitations mitigate the potential power and generalizability of the findings. First, the categories within the observation instrument are somewhat broad. Such categories provided a more workable observation instrument for the researchers to use; one that was more readily and efficaciously adapted to the subtle yet important differences among classrooms. As a consequence, activity types such as discussion included related but admittedly different teaching strategies such as recitation.

Second, detailed descriptions of the classrooms have been intentionally deleted. Given the nature of the study and the unique way in which the subjects were identified (i.e., by the administrators), it became necessary to protect the anonymity of all participants involved by limiting descriptive information on the classrooms.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Three factors differentiate the more effective managers and less effective managers observed in this study: variety of instructional activities, the incidence of misbehavior, and the ability of the teacher to stop misbehavior once it occurs. The MEMs varied lesson formats, permitted fewer misbehaviors, and were capable of stopping misbehavior once it occurred. In

contrast, less effective managers relied on a "favorite" activity, "allowed" large numbers of misbehaviors, and were less able to stop misbehavior.

The use of nonverbal cues and rule reminders were the most effective ways to stop misbehavior for both the LEMs and MEMs. Ignoring misbehavior appeared to exacerbate the amount and intensity of the misbehavior and was the least effective strategy for coping with misbehavior by the LEMs.

In recommending further study of these problems researchers should look more carefully at how the variety of significant others in the school context defines classroom management effectiveness. The fact that the administrators and researchers reached different conclusions regarding the experienced teachers' classroom management skills has important implications for teacher evaluation and assessment. To what degree, for example, do administrators base their judgments of teacher classroom effectiveness on teacher behaviors (positiveness and affability) evidenced outside the class context?

Second, researchers need to study whether and how grade level influences the type of desists that teachers use successfully. Rinne (1984) and others who have studied and described how teachers use desists conceive of a hierarchy that moves from low to high level (e.g., nonverbal cue to public reprimand). They do not discuss whether the age of the students influences the type of desist that should be used by the teachers (see Lasley, 1989). For example, do

teachers working with first graders need to use more high level desists because of the lower level of cognitive development and need for higher control of the younger students? Such research is particularly important given the recent emphasis on high profile strategies such as assertive discipline that are being advocated for teacher use at all grade levels.

Third, researchers should endeavor to study the causes of misbehavior and to investigate how teacher responses might be differential depending on those causes. The researchers made no attempt in this investigation to determine why students exhibited the misbehavior that was observed. As a consequence, this study was limited because causative factors for student behaviors were not explored (e.g., were students misbehaving because they were bored?). The ecological aspects of misbehavior episodes must be taken into account if classroom management is to be understood wholistically. Indeed, much of the newest research on classroom management (Brophy, 1988; Doyle, 1986) has this thrust, but substantial additional work is needed that deals with how students perceive and react to a variety of classroom factors.

Reference Notes

1. Because one teacher had a personality conflict with one of the observers, fewer observations were conducted in her classroom. This teacher (an LEM) also evidenced the highest incidence of misbehavior by the second

observer who did complete all the requisite observations. In fact, the observers felt fortunate to have the teacher allow any observations. Before the study began the teacher was negative about the students' behavior and expressed concern with what the observers might see in her classroom.

2. All names are pseudonyms.

3. Structured interviews were conducted with each of the teachers and after each interview teachers completed the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory. Scores of MEMs and LEMs were computed and compared. These data are part of a follow-up study and are discussed on a limited basis in this paper. The authors recognize the inherent weaknesses of the MTAI. The instrument was used as a complementary data source and as a check on the subjective perceptions the researchers held regarding the teachers.

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Teacher's Reaction to Inattention and Misbehavior

USE: When the teacher is faced with problems of inattention or misbehavior

PURPOSE: To see how the teacher handles these situations. Code the following information concerning the teacher's response to misbehavior or to inattentiveness. Each lower case letter stands for a different misbehavior incident.

BEHAVIOR CATEGORIES		MISBEHAVIOR CODES			
		A	B	C	D
A. TYPE OF SITUATION					
1. Lecture	a.	----	----	----	----
2. Discussion or recitation	b.	----	----	----	----
3. Small group activity	c.	----	----	----	----
4. Independent seatwork or study period	d.	----	----	----	----
5. Transition activity	e.	----	----	----	----
B. TYPE OF MISBEHAVIOR					
1. Nondisruptive (only one or two students involved)	f.	----	----	----	----
2. Disruptive in particular area	g.	----	----	----	----
3. Disruptive for entire class	h.	----	----	----	----
C. TEACHER'S RESPONSE(S)					
1. Moves closer to misbehaving student	i.	----	----	----	----
2. Uses name dropping technique	j.	----	----	----	----
3. Uses nonverbal cue, such as eye contact, hand gesture, touching	k.	----	----	----	----
4. Incorporates distracting behavior as part of lesson	l.	----	----	----	----
5. Investigates privately	m.	----	----	----	----
6. Ignores minor disruption (5 min.)	n.	----	----	----	----
7. Uses a rule reminder	o.	----	----	----	----
8. Uses punishment, such as detention	p.	----	----	----	----
9. Threatens punishment	q.	----	----	----	----
10. Calls offender's name and asks for attention	r.	----	----	----	----
11. Praises someone else's good behavior	s.	----	----	----	----
12. Asks sarcastic questions	t.	----	----	----	----
13. Rewards good behavior	u.	----	----	----	----
14. Other: specify _____	v.	----	----	----	----
D. STUDENT RESPONSE TO TEACHER CORRECTION					
1. Misbehavior stopped	w.	----	----	----	----
2. Misbehavior modified but not stopped; student engages in a different misbehavior	x.	----	----	----	----
3. Misbehavior continues unchanged	y.	----	----	----	----

Adapted from an instrument developed by Good, T., and Brophy., J. (1987). Looking in Classrooms. New York: Harper and Row.